How to make Real-Time Integration (RTI) work

The real time insights on the operational data has become even more important in this era, where the supply chain planning is transitioning from deterministic to probabilistic and manual to touchless planning. Thanks to the Real-Time Integration (RTI) innovation from SAP, the SAP IBP customers now have the opportunity to get benefited by the real-time insights/exceptions based on operational demand and supply changes. New customers can start with Real-Time Integration (RTI), existing SAP IBP Order-Based Planning customers can transition to RTI.

While RTI brings a lot of benefits, we understand that customers may have some reservations about jumping right into it. Below are some examples from our experience:

- How to ensure business continuity?
- How to determine if RTI works out of the box or requires any custom enhancements?

Since the initial release of RTI, Deloitte – in very close collaboration with SAP – has helped many customers successfully go live with RTI. The well-tested best practice approach helps in making the transition safe and efficient.

What is Real-Time Integration (RTI)?

Real-time integration has been available since 2211 to enable faster planning cycles in order-based planning. This integration captures planning-relevant data changes in the ERP system (SAP ECC or SAP S/4HANA, but also non SAP systems will be possible soon) and sends these immediately to SAP IBP without the need for batch jobs. As a result, decisions made in the planning process will be immediately visible to the execution team (e.g., a change in quantity to be shipped). And vice versa, any unforeseen changes in the execution process (e.g., a delay on the production floor due to machine downtime) will be considered in the planning process.

Innovations to SAP IBP Order-Based Planning, both current and future, will be exclusive to RTI. Key examples of these innovations are in the domain of:

- Subcontracting
- Transportation load building
- Characteristic based planning

The nature of the integration technology is very different compared to the current interface for SAP IBP Order-Based (Smart Data Integration SDI). It is comparable to the CIF technology used for SAP APO (even the transactions in ECC and S/4HANA are the same), while SDI requires an installation of the IBP add-on to make it work.

Deloitte as an implementation partner

With plenty of successful implementation experiences, we have learned what makes or breaks a successful RTI implementation:

- It is essential to allocate sufficient time for master data cleansing, the standard behaviour of RTI is different compared to SDI (e.g., wrong setup of special procurement and purchase orders can lead to undesired behaviour)
- SAP Basis support should not be underestimated; various SAP notes may be required in the ECC or S/4HANA environment and the parameter fine tuning during integration test can bring better experience after go-live
- Custom developments in SDI should not be replicated in RTI due to the different nature of the integration technology. There are many functionalities supported by RTI which were not by SDI. Solutions need to be redesigned and thoroughly tested
- With the flexible master data model, and innovations like master data rule, few custom developments can be avoided

Allocate sufficient time for master data cleansing

SAP Basis support should not be underestimated

Solutions need to be redesigned and thoroughly tested

Workarounds can be designed with other integration technologies

- Deloitte RTI accelerators can help to minimize the implementation time and effort:
  - Custom queries to identify any conflicting parameters in the master data. Cleansing can start in parallel of the implementation and ensures a smooth initial data transfer
  - Tested and proven solutions for specific SAP IBP master data objects (e.g., transportation lane) to exclude unwanted data and optimize the monitoring/issue resolving process

Case Study (Multinational Pharmaceutical Company)

The following case study summarizes our most recent RTI implementation:

Issue

The company has decided to transition the entire supply planning process from SAP IBP Time Series to SAP IBP Order Based in phases, in order to:

- Solve current challenges (e.g., data inconsistency, system availability ,Interactive communication with ERP)
- Be able to adopt new functionality on the SAP IBP Roadmap (e.g., Transportation Load Building, Subcontracting and Characteristic Based Planning)

The current SAP Smart Data Integration (SDI) interface between SAP ECC and SAP IBP needs to be replaced by the new SAP Real-Time Integration (RTI) technology, in order to reach the maximum potential of SAP IBP Order Based. The key was to transition to RTI in an efficient way, without interrupting the business processes.

Solution

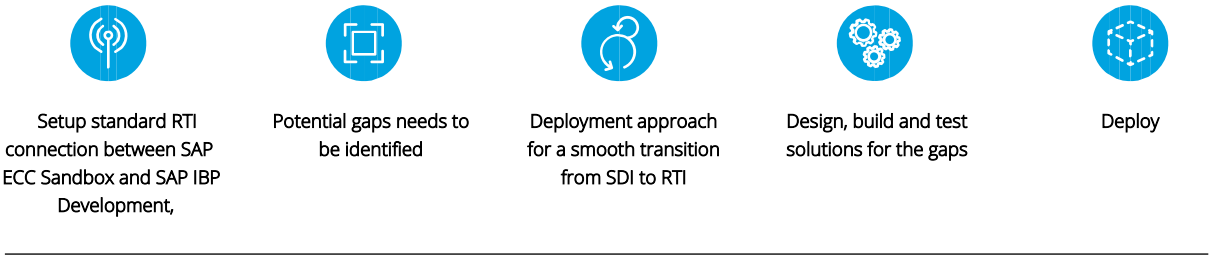
The transition from SDI to RTI will be conducted in a two-step approach:

1. Assessment Phase

- Set up standard RTI connection between SAP ECC Sandbox and SAP IBP Development, in order to test the standard RTI interface for specific scenarios
- Potential gaps needs to be identified, both in current custom SDI developments but also in processes not yet supported in RTI
- Identify the current gaps but in short term road map to avoid unnecessary development
- Define a (phased) deployment approach for a smooth transition from SDI to RTI, without any negative impact to the business

2. Implementation Phase

- Design, build and test solutions for the gaps identified in the previous phase in an agile manner
  Deploy RTI in a phased approach for a smooth transition



Impact

RTI paves the way for a more sophisticated operational supply plan:

- Orders and stock will be updated in real time, providing an accurate overview of the current situation in the supply chain
- New SAP IBP functionality can be adopted to accommodate a planning process which is impossible in SAP IBP Time Series
- The data consistency increases and that help the better adoption of the solution
- The core in cleaner as RTI has better functional coverage than SDI

The phased implementation approach has mitigated any risk in the transition of the interface, preventing any negative impact to the business.

Contact us

Curious how Deloitte can help organizations leverage SAP IBP and S/4HANA for supply chain challenges? Please contact our experts

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